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INDIAN STUDENTS UNIVERSITY PROGRAM SERVICES EVALUATION REPORT

EXAMINATION OF A REPORT BY PROFESSOR EVELYN MOORE, FACULTY OF EDUCATION, UNIVERSITY OF CALGARY

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SOME RECOMMENDATIONS

That a Special Provincial Fund be established. Higher Education Funding Services for Alberta Native Students.

This fund would cover all Native students, status and non-status.

That Federal assistance funds go into the Province and all disbursements be made directly to the students.

That the University and College do not make distinctions between status and non-status Native students (except in reporting to Federal-Provincial funding agencies).

That grants in aid and/or scholorships be made available, after the student meets the existing requirements with as little red tape as possible.

That none of the funds can be used for support or back-up services, funds are to be used for student aid only.

That the student be required to pay all fees, tuition and other related expenditures at time of registration.

That a revolving loan fund be established on a non-interest basis with the incentive that a Native student upon graduating who returns to reserve related employment in his field would not have to pay back some or all of loan.

FURTHER RECOMMENDATIONS RE: PROFESSOR EVELYN MOORE'S REPORT

Students being prepared for University programs, should have the privilege of making mistakes, so that they may learn how to cope with poor decisions and adversities that are experienced in the campus scene.

Use of the pragmatic (learning by doing) approach to build and strengthen the self-confidence of the student.

Tie the program to reality and the ultimate livelihood and resources of the participants. Design an internship period in the home community.

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Design the program so that there will be a great deal of social working and idea inter-action among the students and the instructors.

Maintaining a program where Native students will be the majority, not the minority.

To see that the University, particularly the Red Lodge centre, provides a partial change in environment and atmosphere from the cultural environment of the home communities (who are often in the frustration stage of transition) where too often apathy and feelings of doubt, fear, and self-consciousness have become restraining and inhibiting influences that have mired the people in a habitual "rut". Yet, at the same time, the change must not be so great as to induce dilatating cultural shock, but rather provide an awakening, a renewal of hope, esprit de corps, and a motivation so that they may function effectively.

To have the advanced student become a teaching assistant (or even an instructor) of the new students, thus improving his communication skills and also gaining confidence and experience as a teacher (both in their ethnic language and in English).

To provide an optional degree or non-degree (certificate) program

The degree program would be available to those who are especially qualified and desirous of a degree.

To create a close working relationship with the Bands, the various interested and concerned government agencies, and institutions, and with specific target communities from where the students are enrolled.

Make the program flexible, i.e., should the student need a longer period of time in order to fulfill his requirements, than the schedule calls for and depending on his competitive confidence, and motivation.

The participant's competence would be measured by meeting the requirements in each and every area of study, as developed by a check-off list. The check-off list would concern itself with whether the student understands the theory of his/her discipline, and has demonstrated his ability to perform to the satisfaction of his staff and faculty coaches. His confidence and motivation qualifications will be determined by discussing these attributes with his student, staff, and faculty leaders.

I SPECIAL SERVICES FOR NATIVE STUDENTS IN THE UNIVERSITY

1. A Special Student can be defined as a person who has been subject to systemic, potential-impending, disadvantaging pressures sufficient to limit his or her ability to have been prepared adequately for university admission and study even though he or she has adequate but untapped potential.

2. A Special Student can be defined (teleologically) as a person who is presumed (a) to have experienced disadvantage through the operation of such systemic, potential-impending disadvantage, inqpressures, and (b) to have sufficient potential to meet University graduation standards if accorded special assistance and consideration at the time of recruitment, admission, and for part of the course of a regular or extended degree program.

Policy to assist Special Students should be developed so as to maximize the achievement of two general objectives:

1. Recognize, make suitable allowance for, and then counter the impediments which socio-cultural systemic conditions characteristically, but in violation of the "Canadian Dream", impose on the opportunities of some Canadians, particularly, Indians, Inuit, and Metis, to prepare for University admission and study.

2. Resist those actions which make it appear both to Special Students and the public that Special Students are being favored in such ways that they are awarded grades and degrees at lower than conventional standards.

II NEEDS OF THE STUDENT

The low-income Native student generally comes to the University needing assistance with personal financial, social, cultural and academic problems. Personal problems usually relate to the student's family, kinship affiliations, interest in higher education, hopes for financial and job success after graduation. Financial problems are needed for

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support of self (particularly with the Metis and non-status students) and/or family while attending college, and the general concern that monies will continue to be made available in relationship to grades. Social problems are in the area of relating to the University as a whole - its many programs, offices, services that are available but need to be sorted out. Many students get too involved in social activities and jeopardize their grade point averages and subsequent financial aid while they are attending college. Academic problems relate to courses each student takes according to the college he is enrolled in. Grades, papers, speeches, daily assignments, mid-term examinations, and finals - all of these present special problems to the Native student. Kind of course, class size, time of day, fellow-students, may all affect how well the Native student does in his particular class and how long he remains in college.

Experience has shown that these "Special Students" have very special needs, such as:

(1) Intensive individual counselling (with privacy)
(2) Tutoring on a one-to-one basis
(3) Courses designed for their special interests and skills
(4) Staff personnel who are sensitive to the needs of this particular student
(5) The right mix of faculty and students
(6) The right mix of students - not sheltered courses, but smaller courses where individualized instruction and help can be given
(7) Centralization of support services especially during crucial first and second year in college
(8) A social setting for students, to talk, study and socialize with each other
(9) Adequate financial aid to take care of personal and family needs, and elimination of the "red tape" which frustrates the student and "turns him off"

Implied in providing these special needs, however, is the student working towards self-sufficiency as he progresses in his college work. Through some special curriculum development, and course packaging, these students can be provided with the tools for "making-it" in a University. The only exception may be financial assistance.

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III. CURRICULAR DEVELOPMENT

Throughout this section, packaged courses will be mentioned. A description of what is meant by packaged courses and reasons for packaging should be explained at the outset.

> Packaged courses - packaging means coordinated structuring of present programs - putting them together in packages suited to certain groups of Native students. Students would be kept together - instructors would work together and with counsellors on case-studies. Curriculum would be interdisciplinary, not labeled remedial or reading. Need field experience - hold some courses off campus, develop more courses that relate to, and identify, Native people.

Reasons for Packaging:

1. Can write a program especially designed for students.
2. Instructors and counsellors would work closer with student.
3. Student would receive help earlier in regular courses.
4. Student would elect what they wanted and needed.
5. Student could work at own speed.
6. Class size could be kept small - found more effective.

In outline form, a draft of a "package" for newly arrived Native students, follows. It is anticipated that this "package" could have three major but interlocking sectors:

1. Personal and group orientation to Native history and culture,
2. Re-emphasis of oral communication, reading and writing skills,
3. Personal and group orientation to higher education (to include campus cultures, academic and social expectations; development of skills on "making it" in studies, grades, social life; self-identity maintenance; pressures stemming from home life, etc.)

In most Universities, courses already exist which deal with this group of educational needs individually. The only necessary modification would result from putting these individual courses together as a total, single semester educational experience. To plan and execute this

curriculum development would require the service of the equivalent of one full time and one-half time faculty person. They should be at the assistant professor and instructor ranks respectively.

Related closely to packaged courses are life style courses based on reading and a social activities curriculum. Since many University courses already have aspects of life styles, new course proposals would have emphasis in this area. Certain fundamental academic and related experience could be offered through selected readings and actual field experience such as visiting museums, attending the theatre, etc.

The student may wish independent study which can be offered through the University. Students may design special interest courses that may take them out of their present environment and have them studying abroad or in another Province with, of course, appropriate supervision. Faculty time could be bought for designing these kinds of studies.

Inherent throughout all of these courses is the use of community resources in the form of teachers, agency placement, site visits, etc. Beside using students who have "made it" in college as tutors or class room aides, community people could be brought in. Also community agency personnel could teach certain courses. Community para-professionals could be used as team teachers in the class room and assist in designing courses, developing class materials and bringing in guest lecturers.

Although numerous course numbers exist at the Universities which permit students to engage in independent study projects of their own, the availability of faculty persons to work with students in designing and evaluating these projects is greatly inhibited by the fact that no provision is made for figuring this kind of activity into the definition of a full-time teaching load. Consequently, all such faculty effort is made on top of an otherwise fully committed teaching schedules.

For students seeking success in an environment which has usually been seen as an alien one, the opportunity to engage in specially tailored learning activities may be very important. One full-time faculty

person who could devote his entire teaching load to supervising and facilitating independent study for Native students would make possible greatly increased curricular options. This person should be at the instructor level.

Cross-college programs are unique in that they make possible major concentration of work in more than one college/faculty of the University so that students combine education with social work; Native studies with recreation or public health; family studies or counselling with child development, etc. On several campuses these cross-college programs have had unusual attraction for Native students.

In considering this kind of program development, there should be a full-time director for the Special Services Program, specifically in the area of curriculum development - introducing new courses, obtaining faculty interest, coordinating all efforts in this area.

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